

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method

5 comprising:

rendering graphic elements, wherein said elements are visibly displayed
regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either
active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active
initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said
10 element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

activating some elements and deactivating other elements according to
which task is to be performed, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a
logical order and wherein elements are selectively activated and deactivated to
guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

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2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for
designing a microcontroller.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein said microcontroller is designed
20 according to a programmable system on chip architecture.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein said graphic elements comprise
icons organized in a toolbar.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said graphic elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.

5 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein selected elements are activated and selected other elements are deactivated in response to user selection of an element.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

8. The method of Claim 1 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

9. A computer system comprising:

a bus;

a display device coupled to said bus;

a memory unit coupled to said bus; and

a processor coupled to said bus, said processor for executing a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:

rendering graphic elements on said display device, wherein said elements are visibly displayed regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

activating some elements and deactivating other elements according to which task is to be performed, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein elements are selectively activated and deactivated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

10. The computer system of Claim 9 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

11. The computer system of Claim 10 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable system on chip architecture.

12. The computer system of Claim 9 wherein said graphic elements comprise icons organized in a toolbar.

13. The computer system of Claim 9 wherein said graphic elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.

14. The computer system of Claim 9 wherein selected elements are
5 activated and selected other elements are deactivated in response to user selection of an element.

15. The computer system of Claim 9 wherein selected windows are
10 displayed in response to user selection of an element.

16. The computer system of Claim 9 wherein a first element for a first
task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time,
wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between
said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and
15 said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening
tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

17. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program
code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of
20 helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:

rendering graphic elements, wherein said elements are visibly displayed
regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either
active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active

initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

activating some elements and deactivating other elements according to which task is to be performed, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein elements are selectively activated and deactivated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

18. The computer-usable medium of Claim 17 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

19. The computer-usable medium of Claim 18 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable system on chip architecture.

20. The computer-usable medium of Claim 17 wherein said graphic elements comprise icons organized in a toolbar.

21. The computer-usable medium of Claim 17 wherein said graphic elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.

22. The computer-usable medium of Claim 17 wherein selected elements are activated and selected other elements are deactivated in response to user selection of an element.

23. The computer-usable medium of Claim 17 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

5 24. The computer-usable medium of Claim 17 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said
10 intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

25. A graphical user interface (GUI) for helping a user perform tasks in software, said GUI comprising:

15 a plurality of graphic elements, wherein said elements are visibly displayed regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

20 wherein some elements are activated and other elements are deactivated according to which task is to be performed, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein elements are selectively

activated and deactivated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

26. The GUI of Claim 25 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for
5 designing a microcontroller according to a programmable system on a chip architecture.

27. The GUI of Claim 25 wherein said graphic elements comprise
10 icons organized in a toolbar.

28. The GUI of Claim 25 wherein said graphic elements are displayed
in an order corresponding to said logical order.

29. The GUI of Claim 25 further comprising windows selectively
15 displayed in response to user selection of an element.

30. The GUI of Claim 25 comprising a first element for a first task and a
second element for a second task active at the same time, wherein according to
said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second
20 tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is
accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to
user selection of said first and second elements.